



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ANTI DISCRIMINATION POLICY - 2021

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to explain Watsonia Heights Primary School's commitment to making sure every member of our school community, regardless of their background or personal attributes, is treated with respect and dignity. This policy should be read alongside the following Department of Education and Training policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students](#)
- For staff, the [Respectful Workplaces](#) policies (including [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#), [Sexual Harassment](#) and [Workplace Bullying](#)) as these whole of Department policies apply to all staff at Watsonia Heights Primary School.

POLICY

Definitions

Personal attribute: a personal characteristic that is protected by State or Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation. These include: race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious belief or activity, political belief or activity, age, intersex status, physical features, pregnancy, carer and parental status, breastfeeding, marital or relationship status, lawful sexual activity, employment activity, industrial activity, expunged homosexual conviction or personal association with anyone who is identified with reference to any protected attribute.

Direct discrimination: unfavourable treatment because of a person's protected attribute.

Indirect discrimination: imposing an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice that disadvantages a person or group of people with a protected attribute.

Sexual harassment: unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature towards another person which could reasonably be expected to make that other person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. It may be physical, verbal, visual or written.

Disability harassment: an action taken in relation to the person's disability that is reasonably likely, in all the circumstances, to humiliate, offend, intimidate or distress the person.

Vilification: conduct that incites hatred towards or revulsion or severe ridicule of a person or group of people on the basis of their race or religion.

Victimisation: subjecting a person or threatening to subject them to detrimental treatment because they (or their associate) has made an allegation of discrimination or harassment on the basis of a protected attribute (or asserted their rights under relevant policies or law).

Inclusion and Diversity

Watsonia Heights Primary School strives to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment which values the human rights of all students and staff.

School values, philosophy and vision

Vision Statement

Watsonia Heights Primary School has a commitment to providing a safe, caring environment where children are encouraged to develop as individuals to their best ability. It is a school where well-planned programs are provided to engage students and help them maximise learning opportunities and become life-long learners.

Guiding Principles

Watsonia Heights Primary School has a specific emphasis placed on developing each individual child to their maximum potential within a society that is constantly changing by:

- *Identifying individual needs*
- *Giving equal opportunities to every child to achieve success*
- *Using a range of teaching styles and strategies*
- *Providing specialist programs across a diverse range of disciplines and interests.*

Values

The school motto of “Strive for the Heights” forms our ongoing school focus. If you believe you can achieve! Hence, our values represent the notion to STRIVE!

Our agreed values are:

S – Success – *Our school is focused on ensuring success for each and every child. This is built on the notion that all children can succeed and that success for one child is quite different to that of another. Success takes many forms and is a very personalised concept. Success also relates to team and school success. WHPS is built upon ongoing improvement and, collectively, we work extremely hard for sustained SUCCESS!*

T- Teamwork – *WHPS is a team. Staff, students and parents working together for a collective goal of improvement. This relationship between all stakeholders is imperatively important to securing our effectiveness. We promote a sense of team and a unified approach to ‘getting better on purpose’. Relationship development is a highly valued commodity at WHPS. The way we interact and connect with people, learning and life is a focused goal of our school.*

R – Respect – *WHPS develops the notion of respect in what we do! Amongst other things we promote Respect for self, other people, their cultures, individual and collective learning, our physical and global environment. This is a cornerstone of our belief system that promotes empathy and a development of self.*

I – Individuality – We are committed to improving and enhancing every individual at our school. We focus on providing an individual learning environment that ensures each child is catered for in their ongoing development. *EVERYONE* counts and *EVERYONE* is special. We also see ourselves as an individual school working and aligned within a quality education system. WHPS is special in it's endeavours and we provide the highest quality learning environment that is individual in it's uniqueness.

V – Visionary – At WHPS we Strive for the Heights! We are visionary in our pursuits and foresight to be 'cutting edge' in our mission and goals. Students and staff are encouraged to set aspirational goals – and to reach them! We have a futuristic vision to education and our high expectations are empowering, realistic and achievable! We can be what choose to be!

E – Effort – We promote effort! This value is a life long trait that ensures ongoing success for all stakeholders. Whilst we acknowledge, celebrate and nurture achievement we understand the power of effort! People with an instilled work ethic are destined to achieve beyond expectations whilst those with innate skills can relax in self belief. Effort = excellence!

Through these values we are able to focus on establishing classroom expectation and learning foci that include:

0. Ensuring students feel safe, connected, respected and valued
0. Establishing class routines
0. Getting to know each individual learner and their needs
0. Building relationships
0. Develop a shared understanding of the school values and school code of conduct
0. Understanding the learning process and the components for successful learning
0. Understanding the brain and how to maximise its use, healthy bodies, healthy diets etc...
0. Understanding individual learning styles
0. Goal setting and reflective practices
0. Learning all about Me!

Watsonia Heights Primary School is committed to creating a school community where all members of our school community are welcomed, accepted and treated equitably and with respect regardless of their backgrounds or personal attributes such as race, language, religious beliefs, gender identity, disability or sexual orientation so that they can participate, achieve and thrive at school.

Watsonia Heights Primary School acknowledges and celebrates the diversity of backgrounds and experiences in our school community and we will not tolerate behaviours, language or practices that label, stereotype or demean others. At Watsonia Heights Primary School we value the human rights of every student and we take our obligations under anti-discrimination laws and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities seriously.

Watsonia Heights Primary School will:

- Actively nurture and promote a culture where everyone is treated with respect and dignity
- ensure that students are not discriminated against (directly or indirectly) and where necessary, are reasonably accommodated to participate in their education and school

activities (eg schools sports, concerts, Fetes, Graduations etc.) on the same basis as their peers

- acknowledge and respond to the diverse needs, identities and strengths of all students
- encourage empathy and fairness towards others
- challenge stereotypes that promote prejudicial and biased behaviours and practices
- contribute to positive learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for students
- respond to complaints and allegations appropriately and ensure that students are not victimised.

Watsonia Heights Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

- *high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers*
- *prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing*
- *creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive*
- *welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning*
- *analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data and school level assessment data*
- *deliver a broad curriculum which incorporates student voice, to ensure that programs are tailored to student interests, strengths and aspirations*
- *teachers at Watsonia Heights Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching*
- *our school's STRIVE values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community*
- *carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling*
- *positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents*
- *monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level*
- *students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns*
- *create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through the school concert, athletics, music programs and peer support programs such as the prep and 5/6 buddy program.*
- *Weekly lessons around social and emotional learning, in response to student needs, as documented in the scope and sequence for the school wellbeing program*
- *we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:*

- *Respectful Relationships*
- *Bully Stoppers*
- *Be You*
- *Ripple Kindness*
- *Smiling Minds*
- *programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)*
- *opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, leadership roles, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)*
- *buddy programs, peer support programs.*

Targeted

- *all students are aware that they can seek out advice or support from any member of staff at Watsonia Heights Primary School*
- *connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer*
- *all students in Out of Home Care will have an Individual Learning Plan and will have regular Student Support Group meetings with all staff and external professionals who are involved with the student.*
- *all staff will undertake professional development around social and emotional skills and development, in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff*
- *targeted groups based around individual student needs are put in place each term. These include, but are not limited to:*

-CASEA (CAMHS and School Early Action)

-Peaceful Kids

-Social skills groups

-Conferencing with groups of students having friendship or social issues.

Individual

- *Student Support Groups, see:*
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>
- *Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan*
- *Program for Students with Disabilities*
- *referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services*
- *referral to ChildFirst, Headspace.*

Watsonia Heights Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- *building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances*
- *meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school*

- *developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan*
- *considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up*
- *referring the student to:*
 - *school-based wellbeing supports*
 - *Student Support Services*
 - *appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst.*

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- *being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing*
- *collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student*
- *monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plan in collaboration with the student and their family*
- *running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:*
 - *with a disability*
 - *in Out of Home Care*
 - *with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.*

Bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment, vilification and other forms of inappropriate behaviour targeting individuals or groups because of their personal attributes will not be tolerated at Watsonia Heights Primary School. We will take appropriate measures, consistent with our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* and *Bullying* policies to respond to students who demonstrate these behaviours at our school.

Students who may have experienced or witnessed this type of behaviour are encouraged to speak up and to let their teachers, parents or carers know about those behaviours to ensure that inappropriate behaviour can be addressed.

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

All students:

- have the right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive
- have the right to be treated with respect, dignity and honesty
- have the responsibility to consider others, to embrace the value of difference and to contribute to building a fair and just environment
- learn in an environment which encourages each student to grow and realise their potential
- communicate ideas and opinions confidently and freely.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

Reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities

Watsonia Heights Primary School also understands that it has a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with disabilities. A reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist students with disabilities to participate in their education on the same basis as their peers. Reasonable adjustments will be made for students with disabilities in consultation with the student, their parents or carers, their teachers and if appropriate, their treating practitioners. Our school may consult through Student Support Group processes and in other less formal ways. For more information about support available for students with disabilities, and communicating with us in relation to a student's disability, please refer to our school's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* policy or contact Michael Kent or Tony Ryan for further information.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website (or insert other online parent/carers/student communication method)
- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Discussed at student forums
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

For staff, please see the Department's [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy](#), [Sexual Harassment Policy](#) and [Workplace Bullying Policy](#) which apply to all staff working at our school.

Other relevant Department policies and resources on the Department's Policy and Advisory Library are:

- o [Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students](#)
- o [Students with Disability](#)
- o [Koorie Education](#)
- o [Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture](#)
- o [Safe Schools](#)
- o [Supports and Services](#)
- o [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

Policy last reviewed	November 2021
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	November 2025